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THE METROPOLITAN VISITATION OF THE DIOCESE OF DERRY,

BY JOHN COLTON, D.D., ARCHBISHOP OF ARMAGH AND PRIMATE OF IRELAND, A.D. 1397

Translated from the Rev. Dr. Reeves' edition of the original Record; with a Historical Introduction, a Map, and Notes.

BY THE REV. J. SCOTT PORTER.

PREFACE.

THE document, of which a translation is here presented, is the original record, in ecclesiastical Law Latin, of a Visitation of the Diocese of Derry, made by Archbishop Colton, as Primate and Metropolitan, during a vacancy of the See, A.D. 1397. It consists of a vellum roll upwards of six feet long, with a schedule of nineteen inches in length appended; and is preserved in the Record Room of the See of Armagh. By permission of the present Lord Primate, it was printed at the private expense of that accomplished Antiquarian, the Reverend Dr. Reeves, and presented by him to the Irish Archæological Society,* as one of their publications; with an Introduction, Notes and Appendix, in which a vast multitude and variety of topics,—all the topics indeed which are required for the illustration of the text,—are discussed in a manner equally clear, learned, and copious. The able editor has brought together nearly all the information that can now be procured on the history of the persons, families, localities, and institutions, the titles of dignity, and the religious ceremonies, mentioned in the record. Nothing of the kind has ever been brought before the public in a style more satisfactory and complete. From the moment when that publication first met my eye, I regretted that a document, throwing so much light on the state of religion, morals, law, and civilization in Ireland at the close of the fourteenth century, should remain locked up from common readers in the obscurity of a dead language; and hoped that the learned editor would republish it in an English version. I even took the liberty of suggesting to Dr. Reeves that he should bestow this additional labour on a document for which he had already done so much, and which no other person is equally competent to illustrate; but finding, from his reply, that he had no intention of bringing out a translation, and being encouraged by his offer to communicate to me, in case of my undertaking the task, some farther

* Acts of Archbishop Colton in his Metropolitan Visitation of the Diocese of Derry, A.D. mcccxcvii; with a Rental of the See-Estates at the time; edited from the Original Roll preserved in the Archiepiscopal Re-

cord Closet of Armagh, with an Introduction and Notes. By the Rev. WILLIAM REEVES, D.D. M.R.I.A., &c. Dublin: for the Irish Archæological Society, 1850.

information which had occurred to him since his edition was published,—an offer of which I eagerly availed myself,—I have determined to lay before the public a version which I made some time since, partly for my own amusement, and partly for the use of a friend who wished to read the work, and found the Latin style of the original somewhat troublesome to master. Subjoined to the text are some notes; chiefly such as are required for the mere purpose of explanation. By an obliging permission from Dr. Reeves, I have been at liberty to make use of the materials amassed in his Notes, Introduction and Appendix: and I have availed myself of the privilege as far as they coincided with the design of a translation. I have frequently referred to Dr. Reeves as my authority; but I must give my readers notice that in his work they will find many subjects discussed and much information given, of which there is no mention whatever in mine. In a very few points I have ventured to differ from him: but always with that respect which I sincerely feel. In the Historical Introduction I have freely availed myself of the labours of Dr. Petrie and Professor O'Donovan, whose admirable Memoir on the History of the city of Londonderry, contained in the first volume of the *Ordnance Survey*,—the only one as yet published,—gives us great reason to regret the obstacles which have interrupted, (may we hope, only suspended?) the continuance of their labours in that department.

An outline map of the Diocese of Derry is given, which is designed to explain the local allusions occurring in the Visitation Register, and in the Notes. The sites of churches marked are those of the *old* edifices, probably those which existed in A.D. 1897: but most of them are now in ruins, being replaced by modern structures.

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION.

EPISCOPACY in Ireland is co-eval with Christianity. Palladius, the forerunner of Patrick was consecrated a Bishop before he set forth from Rome on his mission. St. Patrick was in like manner consecrated in Gaul before he sailed for Ireland, to which he came as the herald of the Gospel, after having left it as a fugitive slave. Many of the companions of St. Patrick were raised to the episcopal rank, after having, like himself, passed through the inferior orders of deacon and priest. There cannot be a doubt that the early Irish church acknowledged the superior order and authority of Bishops as compared with Presbyters. It would be strange, indeed, if ecclesiastics educated in Gaul and Italy, in the fifth century, or the pupils of those who had been so educated, had entertained any other opinion. The church which they planted in Ireland never was without Bishops. It had, at particular times, great numbers of them: so many that it was often able to send out whole troops of Bishops to the continent of Europe, and yet retain an ample supply for the discharge of home duty. It never was other than an episcopal church.

But with all this I suspect that the establishment of permanent Sees, having territorial jurisdiction and a regular succession of Bishops, is of comparatively recent date in Ireland.

Diocesan Episcopacy, as now understood and practised, implies the establishment of distinct Sees, each of which, unless it be canonically suppressed, must always have its Bishop; who, again, has, during his incumbency, jurisdiction over a defined territory, within which no other Bishop can, against or without his consent, exercise episcopal functions; and, unless the See be canonically abolished, removed, or annexed, must have for his successor another Bishop with the like powers.

But Bishops of this kind were not, for many years after the planting of the church, known in Ireland. St. Patrick was not a Bishop of this sort, for he itinerated through the whole island, converting, baptising, and ordaining;—founding churches and erecting monasteries wherever it was in his power to do so. Auxilius, Iserninus and Secundinus, all of them Bishops, joined him while engaged in the labours of his mission. Their arrival made no difference in his manner of proceeding: each of the illustrious four laboured wherever he could find an opening. They consecrated not a few Bishops, during their lives; but still they, and their new colleagues, appear to have proceeded precisely as they had done before. It never seemed to have entered their minds that each of them ought to have a limited territory for his diocese—that he was to confine his episcopal care and oversight to it exclusively—that no other Bishop could or ought to intermeddle with the churches, the clergy or the people there, without his own consent. Some modern writers, or writers *comparatively* modern,—transferring to the past, the ideas of the present time—have spoken of the erection of Sees by St. Patrick, and his companions, or immediate followers, in this place and that; but it is remarkable that in the vast majority of instances, the more careful inquirers find, that though the existence and residences of the *Bishop* be indisputable, something is wanting to the proof of the erection or existence of the *See*. To prove this it is not sufficient to show that a particular person was a Bishop, and that he lived and died in a particular place: it is required to shew that he had a definite territorial jurisdic-

tion, and an episcopal successor ; and it is truly wonderful how often the proof of both these points is totally wanting. Dr. Lanigan abounds in rectifications of mistakes made by his predecessors in such matters. If, indeed, every place where a Bishop was located, is to be considered as an episcopal See, it would follow that there must have been many hundred Sees in Ireland. St. Bernard, in the 11th century, complains that almost every church in Ireland had its Bishop. (*Vita S. Malachiae*. c. 7.)

And this might easily happen : for—however contrary it may seem to the notions which at present prevail,—the Episcopate in the early Irish Church, appears to been a *personal* not a *local* prerogative. Whenever a clergyman was found, who, in the judgment of the neighbouring Bishops, united in himself the qualifications requisite for sustaining the episcopal character, they conferred the office and rank of Bishop upon him, by consecration. Sometimes a single Bishop felt himself authorized to institute and consecrate another Bishop, without the concurrence of any of his brethren, or their consent previously obtained. Facts of this kind meet us frequently in every good Ecclesiastical History of Ireland, and in the documents from which they are drawn. Dr. Lanigan, to his honour, does not attempt to deny them, nor to conceal them. He even admits that the Bishops, thus consecrated, were not Prelates in the modern sense of the word ; nor their dwelling-places episcopal Sees. He calls them *Chorepiscopi*, and *Suffragans*, that is *rural* and *elective* Bishops ; and allows that there were great numbers of them ; but his own facts and extracts shew that there was, originally, no distinction whatever between those whom he thus denominates and those whom he regards as the Bishops of proper Sees. He admits that the Irish called both by the very same name ; and he has failed to bring forward a single passage from any *ancient* authority, in which the powers of those whom he calls *Chorepiscopi* or *Suffragans* are declared to be different, in any respect, from those of diocesan Bishops, or to be limited to districts governed by those Bishops who ordained them, or dependent on the will and pleasure of a superior or Ordinary. His argument is briefly this :—The consecration of those multitudinous Bishops would have been uncanonical, had they been other than *chorepiscopi* ; but they were consecrated in Ireland and in great numbers ; nor was their consecration ever regarded as uncanonical ; therefore, they were *Chorepiscopi*. The argument, however, runs quite as well in logic, and far more consistently with fact, the other way :—The Irish consecrated,—in great numbers and for many generations,—Bishops, who neither had fixed Sees, nor any regular succession, and yet possessed none of the distinctive marks of *Chorepiscopi* : therefore they did not regard such consecrations as uncanonical :—which I believe was truly the case. Indeed Dr. Lanigan admits that “it was quite usual in Ireland to raise pious monks to the episcopacy without giving them fixed Sees. * * * The *Chorepiscopi*, of whom we had great numbers, were styled *Bishops* ; and, perhaps, no small part of those seventeen Bishops buried in Cork :” [*they were too numerous to have been successive in the same See* ;] “belonged to that class.”—(*Eccles. Hist.* ii. 318.) It is sufficient to reply, perhaps they were not ; and that this is just as probable as the other alternative, or a little more so, is manifest from the fact that the earliest and only passage in which the learned historian has found mention of *Chorepiscopi* at all is in

Rochfort's Constitutions passed at Newtown^a in the year 1216 : which we admit to be genuine, but think of little authority in reference to the early history of the church; for they were enacted a hundred years after the synod held at Rathbreasail A.D. 1118, (under the auspices of Gillebert, Bishop of Limerick, Legate of the Pope, the first who ever appeared under that character in Ireland,) at which canons were passed making Diocesan Episcopacy the law of the Irish Church; and, therefore, long subsequent to the time when a tendency to it had begun strongly to manifest itself.

I do not mean to deny that a *tolerably* complete series of Bishops may be traced,—not without some interruptions and some rather fanciful links, however,—in Armagh, and, perhaps, in some other of the more important monasteries, which were founded at a very early period after the introduction of Christianity. But even though the series could be well made out in all its parts, there would be nothing in it inconsistent with the opinion already expressed. Armagh, for example, was a great monastic institution, founded by St. Patrick, for the maintenance of the Christian religion and the fulfilment of its duties. It is highly probable that, from the first, it contained not only a society of monks, but a convent for pious virgins, such as would now be called a nunnery : it is certain that it contained a school for the education of youth. All these institutions flourished vigorously for many years. There were multitudes of the most learned and pious monks in the world there assembled : and as “it was quite usual in Ireland to raise pious monks to the episcopacy,” no doubt several of those in Armagh were from time to time advanced to that dignity. When once it became customary to find a Bishop or Bishops resident at Armagh, the next step was to consider that it ought never to be without one; and this I imagine to have given rise to the unbroken succession, which we find in after times, and to the See. When the same notion began to prevail regarding other places, the limitation of their respective jurisdictions by territorial boundaries was an unavoidable consequence.—In all this, I have been conceding what can seldom be proved, that a continuous series of Bishops is traceable in several of the ancient Sees of Ireland, as they are now called. It is certain that in many places Bishops were succeeded, *not by Bishops*, but by Abbots who were merely Presbyters; and Presbyter-Abbots by Bishops; that Deacons and Presbyters sometimes became Bishops, being chosen to that dignity, not as suffragans or successors to any former Bishops, but as a matter of personal respect, and a help to their farther usefulness :—that the proffered elevation was sometimes declined by those to whom it was tendered; and, that when it was declined, it never seems to have been thought necessary to elect another person to the episcopate as to a vacant office :—all which circumstances are capable of easy proof, but are not easily reconciled with the prevalence of Diocesan Episcopacy in the early Irish Church. Of course they are totally irreconcilable with the assertion that the early Irish Church was not episcopalian; an assertion which it is surprising to find some learned men bold enough to hazard.

But however this question may be viewed, it cannot be denied that for many years after the planting of Christianity in Derry, it was not in any sense, the See of a Bishop :—that the first Bishops

^a Near Trim, in the County of Meath : (see Wilkins, *Concilia*, vol. i. p. 545.)

who, at intervals, appear to have had their residence at the place, were not Bishops of the See ;—and that no succession of Bishops with jurisdiction over a diocese can be shewn to have existed at Derry, from an earlier date than the middle of the thirteenth century.

Yet Derry has been eminent in the history of the Irish Church, from the middle of the sixth century to the present time. It was about the year 546 that Columba, afterwards called St. Columbkille,—*Columba of the Churches*—being then of no higher rank in the hierarchy than that of a simple Deacon,—erected a monastery on a pleasant eminence covered with oaks, and thence denominated *Doire Calgach*,—"the Oak wood of Calgach,"—afterwards called from himself *Derry-Columbkill*,—in more modern times, *London-derry*,—or *Derry*, without addition. That he was a Deacon at the time of this foundation, may be inferred from the legend recorded by Dr. Lanigan ; (*Ecc. Hist.* ii. 117 :) that he was of no higher order in the church may be concluded with certainty from that which is related by the same author as having occurred several years afterwards, while Columba was still at Daire-magh, or Durrow in Meath, where he founded another illustrious monastery, which, as all authorities are agreed, was erected after that at Derry-Calgach, though before that of Iona. "It is related that, being judged worthy of the episcopacy, he was sent, with the approbation of several prelates, to St. Etchen for the purpose of being consecrated by him. Etchen resided at Clain-bile, [now Clonfad in Westmeath, which lies not far from Durrow.] * * * "Being arrived near Etchen's church, the saint inquired for the Bishop and was told,—'there he is below ploughing in the field.' He then went up to him and was welcomed with the greatest kindness by the holy prelate, who, on being apprised of the reason of his visit, did not hesitate to ordain him soon after. Yet * * * through a sort of mistake, Etchen ordained him *not a Bishop*, as was the general wish of the clergy and people, *but a Priest*. * * * Etchen on discovering the mistake offered to consecrate him a Bishop, which proposal Columba declined, attributing what had happened to a dispensation of Providence, and declaring that he would remain during the rest of his life in the order to which he had been admitted."—(*Ecclesiastical History of Ireland*, vol. ii. p. 125–6.)

This anecdote is very adverse to the idea of diocesan jurisdiction and perpetual succession as necessarily belonging to the episcopal office : and Dr. Lanigan labours hard in a closely printed note of two pages, to bring the fact into harmony with the present theory, by means of his imaginary *chorepiscopate*, &c. ; of which his authorities say not a single word, and manifestly never dreamed.—But, leaving him to settle that point with his readers as best he may, the anecdote at least proves beyond dispute that the monastery and church at Derry were founded *not by a Bishop*, nor even by a Presbyter, but by a mere Deacon ; a member of the lowest order of the clergy, properly so called, in the church.

The monastery founded by Columbkille was the germ of the city of Derry : it holds a conspicuous place in the history of the Irish Church. The successors (in Irish *comharba*,—by Latin writers rendered *comorbanus*,—by English most frequently *coarb*,) of Columbkille,—i. e. the Abbots of Derry, are frequently mentioned in the "Annals of the Four Masters," and other registers of the same nature :

but we pass over a long series of years before we come to any who possessed episcopal dignity.—The writers of the “History of the City of Londonderry” contained in the first volume (the only one yet published) of the ‘Ordnance Survey of the County,’ have been exceedingly careful and industrious in collecting all notices of this nature. To them I am indebted for the following extracts: I begin with the first who is called a Bishop.

A.D. 927. “Caoneomhrac, son of Maoluidhir, Abbot and *Bishop* of Derry-Calgach, and keeper of the canons of St. Adamnan,” [at Raphoe,] “died.” This was nearly 400 years after the foundation of the monastery. All the intervening Abbots of whom we have any account, were of no higher rank than Presbyters.

A.D. 936. “Dubhthach, *coarb* of Columb-kille and Adamnan in Ireland and Scotland,”—that is Abbot of Derry, Raphoe, and Iona,—“died.” The writer in the Survey says “he was the nephew of his predecessor,” but he does not appear to have been a Bishop.

A.D. 937. “Finachtach, the son of Kellach, *coarb* of Derry, a *Bishop* and a sage, skilled in the old language of Ireland, died.”

A.D. 948. “Maolfinnen the learned *Bishop* of Derry-Calgach, died.”

A.D. 950. “Adland, the son of Egueach, who was the son of Dalach, *coarb* of Columbkille, the *Guaire Aidhne*,” (proverbial for generous hospitality,) “of the Irish clergy, died.”—He was the successor to the foregoing Bishops, as *coarb* of Columb-kille; but yet is not said to have been a Bishop.

And so we have, in the year 952, the death of Robhartach recorded,—in 957 that of Dubhduin,—in 962 that of Dubhseuile, and in successive years the death of other persons,—all of whom are commemorated as *Coarbs* or successors of Columb-kille; but not one of whom is described as a Bishop, till we arrive at

A.D. 1010. “Muireadhach, the son of Cricchan, *Coarb* of Columb-kille and Adamnan, a learned doctor and *Bishop*, a son of purity, lecturer of divinity at Armagh, and intended *Coarb* of Patrick, died in the 75th year of his age,” &c., &c.

Afterwards the deaths are registered of Maoleoin O’Tornain, Maolmuireadhach O’Ochtain, Robhartach, Giolla-Chriost O’Maoldoraidh, and some others, *Coarbs* of Columb-kille: but not spoken of as Bishops. No particulars being given with reference to any of the foregoing personages, it may, perhaps, appear to readers probable, or at least possible, that there may have been an orderly succession of Bishops,—a fixed See,—and the centre of a diocesan jurisdiction at Derry;—the records of which, with the exception of the foregoing brief notices, are now lost. But the fuller information which we have respecting the Abbot and Bishop, Flahertach O’Brolchain, renders this supposition in the highest degree improbable.

A.D. 1158. “An assemblage was held by the Irish Clergy at Brigh-mac-Taidhg in the territory of Hy-Laoghaire, at which were present twenty-five Bishops together with the apostolic legate, for the purpose of establishing ecclesiastical discipline and the improvement of morals. In this assembly, the clergy of Ireland and the *Coarb* of St. Patrick,” [Gelasius, Archbishop of Armagh, so called,

however, as it appears to me, because he was also Abbot of the monastery there,] “decreed by common consent that a Bishop’s chair,” [*cathaoir Easpoice*,—*Cathedra Episcopii*,] “should be given to the Coarb of St. Columb-kille, Flahertach O’Brochain.”—(*Annals of the Four Masters*.) Again the same Chroniclers, at 1175, record that “Flahertach O’Brochain, Coarb of Columb-kille, a tower of wisdom and hospitality,—to whom, for his wisdom and great virtues, the clergy of Ireland had given a Bishop’s chair, and offered the superintendence of the monastery of Iona,—after having borne the pains of a long infirmity with patience, died most piously in the monastery of Derry.—*He was succeeded, in the Abbey*, by Giolla MacLigg O’Brennan.” The Annalists knew of no successor to O’Brochain, as Bishop.—It is needless to point out how utterly irreconcilable all this is with the existence of an episcopal See at Derry, or of a diocesan jurisdiction dependent upon it. These entries show that there had been nothing of the kind there before the time of Bishop O’Brochain. That a permanent See, with diocesan jurisdiction, was not erected there by the convention of Brigh-mac-Taidhg, is evident from the request afterwards made to Flahertach, to undertake the superintendence of Iona: for that would imply that, after placing his chair at Derry, the clergy wished him to remove it to the Hebrides, or leave it vacant. That no permanent bishoprick was established at Derry is farther manifest from the fact that, for nearly a hundred years afterwards, there were no Bishops there. In short the elevation of O’Brochain to the episcopal rank, was a tribute of respect to his personal worth and eminent talents. There was evidently no intention of giving to him a diocese to govern, with episcopal authority, and exclusive jurisdiction within its limits. He was made just such a Bishop as his illustrious predecessor Columb-kille would have been made, but for St. Etchen’s mistake:—that is, what we may call, a *Bishop at large*. This is the more remarkable, as the consecration of Bishop O’Brochain came forty years after the synod of Rathbreasail which enacted the principle of diocesan episcopacy as the law of the church in Ireland:—it shows how inveterate was the custom of consecrating Bishops with unlimited commissions, or with authority over particular monasteries and churches only. I should, perhaps, have mentioned before, that Keating and Ware state that, at a synod held at Kells in A.D. 1152, under the legate Cardinal Paparo, Derry was raised to the rank of a diocesan See and placed in subjection to the archiepiscopal See of Armagh. But Dr. Lanigan has shown that this is a mistake on the part of these learned writers, or the authorities which they followed. Indeed the facts relating to the consecration of Bishop O’Brochain in 1158 sufficiently prove the statement to be incorrect. It is needless to dwell farther upon it, nor upon Dr. Lanigan’s own assertion, (equally groundless,) that, at the convention of Brigh-mac-Taidhg, “after the ordinary business was over, it was resolved *that Derry should be raised to the rank of a regular See, and Flathbert,*” [*Flahertach*] “O’Brochain, abbot of its monastery, was appointed its Bishop.” (*Eccl. Hist.* iv. 168.) For the statement in Italics, I cannot find the shadow of authority: the learned writer himself has produced none. Keating, indeed, had fixed a See there already, dating it even from the synod of Rathbreasail, A.D. 1118: and Dr. Lanigan adopts *that* statement, (p. 42.) though quite inconsistent with what he says 120 pages farther down. From what has already been

shown, it follows that it cannot possibly be true.—Yet I hold that the synod of Rathbreasail, planted the germ of the See of Derry, by instituting a permanent bishoprick having jurisdiction over the Kinel-Eoghain, a territory whose limits then nearly coincided with those of the present counties of Tyrone and Londonderry. This bishoprick is sometimes called that of Kinel Fereadaigh, because the original dwelling-place of its Bishops was at the monastery of Ardstraw, situated in that locality; sometimes it was called the bishoprick of Ardstraw; sometimes that of Rathlury, (now Maghera,) because some of the Bishops fixed their abode there;—but its most frequent title in the Annals is the bishoprick of Kinel-Eoghain: and because this comprehensive title is in many cases the only one employed, there is often the greatest uncertainty as to the places where particular Bishops of the diocese held their seat; and learned and diligent antiquarians have found it impossible to decide at what precise time the See was removed from Ardstraw to Rathlury (i.e. Maghera,) or thence to Derry, which was its final resting place.

For a long period after the time of Bishop O'Brolchain there is no authentic record of any Bishop at, or of, Derry. The Four Masters, no doubt, speak of the death of Muireadhach O'Cobhthaigh, (this difficult looking name is pronounced Murragh O'Coffy,) Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, in 1173; but this is a manifest error: for in that year O'Brolchain was still living, and if there was then any Bishop of Derry, he was certainly the man. The entry was copied from the Annals of Connaught; and there Muireadhach is correctly styled the Bishop of Kinel-Eoghain. Hence it appears the O'Clerys have in this instance substituted the modern name of the See for its ancient equivalent. With this exception, if it can be called an exception, there is no notice of any Bishop of Derry for a long series of years. Yet the Annalists were not inattentive to the affairs of Derry—Columbkille. There is frequent mention of the deaths and resignations of the Abbots of Derry, their transactions; the election of their successors;—the death of a Chief Professor or Principal of its school is recorded;—even a Herenach of pious character, though but a lay-man, is commemorated;—but no Bishop. It would be strange if the chroniclers, who record the fate of these inferior personages, had left the most eminent characters who adorned the place entirely out of view. Be it borne in mind that while thus strangely forgetful of the Bishops of Derry, (if there were any,) they are faithful and regular in their notices of the Bishops of Kinel-Eoghain, or *Tyrone* as the name is expressed almost uniformly in Mr. Connellan's Translation of the Four Masters. Thus in 1173, we have, or rather ought to have, the death of Muireadhach O'Cobhthaigh, Bishop of Kinel-Eoghain: in 1185, we find that "*Amhlaoibh O'Muireadhach, Bishop of Ardstraw,*" [Mr. O'Connellan under a mistaken impression, translates this *Archbishop of Armagh*: but see Ordnance Survey, p. 31.] "*and of Kinel Fereadaigh, a shining light, illuminating both clergy and people, died: and Fogartaidh O'Cearbhallain,*" [Fogarty O'Carolan] "*was elected his successor.*" In 1230, "*Florence O'Cearbhallain,*" [Florence is but a Latinized variation of the Irish *Fogartaidh*,] "*Bishop of Tyrone, a select and dignified sage, died in the 86th year of his age.*"—In 1276 and again in 1279,—in one place or the other by mistake,—we read, "*Giolla-an Coibhde O'Cearbhallain, Bishop of Tyrone, died.*" By other writers his first name is Latinized,

Germanus.—Thus for rather more than a century after the time of Bishop O'Brolchain, we have Bishops of Ardstraw, Kinel-Eoghain or Tyrone : but no Bishops of Derry. It is for those who hold with Dr. Lanigan that Derry-Columbkille was by the synod of Brigh-mac-Taidhg "raised to the rank of a regular episcopal See, and that Flahertach O'Brolchain was appointed its Bishop," to reconcile these facts with their own view of the case.

From this time forward, however, all this is reversed. After 1279 we read of Bishops of Derry ; but hear not a word more of Bishops of Ardstraw or Kinel Eoghain.

In 1293, "Florence O'Cearbhallain," [otherwise Fogartaidh,] "Bishop of Derry, died." He seems to have transferred the See to Derry : and I think the writer of the Historical Sketch in the Ordnance Survey has laid good grounds for believing that it was not till the time of his immediate predecessor, and probably his kinsman, Germanus, that Derry itself was annexed to the Diocese of Kinel Eoghain, having previously belonged to that of Kinel-Connell, now called Raphoe. Germanus is certainly spoken of by good writers as an ecclesiastical usurper. He is accused in the Register of the See of Clogher of having stripped that See, and also the See of Raphoe, of certain territories, by force. It is thought that he added the whole peninsula of Innishowen to his jurisdiction : otherwise it will not be easy to explain how a district which then formed part of Kinel Connell, should ever after be found in connexion with the bishoprick of Kinel-Eoghain.

It may be presumed that when Bishop Florence O'Cearbhallain removed the seat of his episcopal jurisdiction to Derry-Columbkille, he took measures for providing a regular Cathedral, with a Dean and Chapter.—To this purpose the great structure "*Teampull Mor*," built by O'Brolchain about a century ago, was appropriated : the more ancient church of "*Duibh Regles*," or the Black Abbey, on the site which was occupied by St. Columbkille, being left as a conventual chapel to the monks of the monastery, now reformed into a society of Canons Regular. After this time, the succession of Bishops is quite regular, and proceeds in the following order,—the years given being the years of the recorded deaths.

A. D. 1297. Henry Mac Oireachty, died. In the Annals of the Four Masters, and also in the Connaught Annals, he is entered as Bishop of Connor : but that he was in some sort Bishop of Derry is evident ; because Ware has found the *Congé d'élire*, dated on the 25th October 1293, for the election of a successor to Fogartaidh O'Cearbhallain ; the royal assent to the election of MacOireachty on the 3rd of March following ; and the king's writ for the restitution of the temporalities of the See, dated the 16th of June, 1294. This shews that the power of the king of England had begun to make itself felt in ecclesiastical appointments in Ulster at this period :—although probably MacOireachty had never ventured to exercise episcopal jurisdiction within his new diocese.

A. D. 1315. Gorry, [Godfrey or Geoffrey] Mac Loughlin died.—He was consecrated Bishop of Derry and obtained a Writ for the restitution of the temporalities, A. D. 1297, on the 26th of June. Hence he governed the See upwards of seventeen years. His name would appear to imply that he was of the blood royal of the ancient Irish kings ; the first or most noble branch of the family of the

O'Neills—that which reigned at Aileach near Derry—being called, in ancient times, O'Loughlin or MacLoughlin;—more recently, O'Neill simply.

A.D. 1319. Odo, [Hugh] O'Neill.

A.D. — On the death of Odo, “they elected Michael MacLoughlin.” [Ware.] It is uncertain how long he governed the diocese. He sat in 1324.

A.D. — “Simon, a Friar, (but I know not of what order,) governed this see in 1367 and 1369. I have not yet discovered either when he was consecrated, or when he died.” [Ware *Ap. Ord. Sur.*]

A.D. 1395. John Dongan, “a Benedictine Friar, was translated by the provision of Pope Boniface IX, from the See of Derry to that of Down in 1395: in which See he died in 1412.” [Harris' Ware *Ap. Ord. Sur.*] The See continued vacant six years. It was during this vacancy that the Visitation occurred which is the subject of the following record. The instrument itself gives materials for a definite determination of many points which, but for it, must have remained altogether unknown. Thus we find that the Diocese of Derry had now lapsed into the condition of a Bishoprick “*inter Hibernicos*” or without the pale:—that its limits were nearly, if not exactly the same as at present:—that the Bishop's authority as Diocesan was now fully recognized in every parish within its bounds: and that the money payments and “refections” claimable by the Bishop were settled at the same rate, very nearly, at which they continued till the beginning of the sixteenth century. We also find that the Irish Lords and Chiefs were very anxious to appropriate to themselves the spoils of the church to which they professed to belong: in fact they shewed the very same feeling in this respect which animated the nobility of England in the reigns of K. Henry VIII. and Edward VI. and had their desires been gratified by the reigning powers,—as was the case in England,—it is possible that a similar effect might have been produced on the religious profession of the country.

In this outline, the history of the See or Diocese of Derry has been rapidly traced from the earliest period of the planting of Christianity to the time when the following record was composed. A few minor details will be found in the notes which have been subjoined to the Visitation Roll. I have not thought it necessary to carry the narrative farther down.

I shall conclude this Introduction by a passage from the finding of an *Inquisition* as it is called, held at Lymnavaddy in the then County of Coleraine, now called the County of Londonderry, empannelled in the month of August 1609, for the purpose of deciding what lands, incomes, and rights of property, arising out of the lands in the county, belonged to the see of Derry; and other points which, however, are only described as “matters specified in the Commission of the Court.” The jurors were persons of the ancient Irish families which were then the leading septs in the County: and although their finding goes further back into the history of the past, apparently, than there were, or are, sure documents of evidence to guide them, and although it appears to have been constructed, in many respects on a partizan model,—and in some of its determinations was outrageously unjust,—yet in the question respecting the general nature of the episcopal revenues, it appears to be perfectly correct,

and no less applicable to the time of Primate Colton's Visitation than to the beginning of the 17th century.—I add, that when the jurors speak of *Bishops*, as of *recent institution*, and introduced by the authority of the Roman See,—I understand them to mean *Diocesan Bishops*, with extensive jurisdiction, and rights of property extending beyond the particular monastery or church in which they resided. Thus limited, I conceive the verdict to be sound: if taken without some such limitation, I look upon it as erroneous in this particular.

“Touchinge the originall and difference of *Corbes* and *Herenaghes*, and the Termon Lands of the said Countie of Coleraine, the said jurors doe, upon their oathes find and say that Donell Mac-Hugh O’Nealle, kinge of Ireland [in 635,] did, longe before any Bushoppes were made in the said kingdome of Ireland, give unto *certain holy men* whom they call *Sancti Patres*, [*these were manifestly the saints who founded churches and monasteries in the district,*] “severall portions of lande and a third parte of all the Tiethes, to th’end they should say praiers,” [*the jurors might have added ‘for the soul of the donor’; but that would have made the gift in law superstitious, and so vested it in the crown, which was not what the promoters of the inquisition wanted,*] “and bear a third parte of the chardge of repairinge and mainteyninge the parishe church; th’other twoe third parts beinge borne by the parson and vicar to whom the rest of the Tiethes is yerely paid; and alsoe for their own honor and sustentation; and that afterwards the said holy men did give unto severall septs, severall proportions of the said lands, and placed one or more of them in every parishe, and withall gavè unto him a third parte of the Tiethes of that parish, to hould both the said land and the third parte of the said Tiethes, for ever, according to the course of Tanistrie, free from all exactions: and that for that cause the land was called *Termon*, or *free*; and the tennant thereof some tymes called *Corbe*, and some tymes *Herenagh*; and that the said Corbe or Herenagh was to beare a third parte of the chardge in repairinge and mainteyninge the parishe church; and that the said portion of land and the third parte of the Tiethes so continued free unto the Corbe or Herenaghe for many yeres, until the Church of Rome established Bushoppes in this kingdome and decreed that every Corbe or Herenagh should give unto the Bushopp (within whose dioces he lived,) a yearly pension, more or less according to his proportion out of his entire Herenachie consisting of the said land and the said third parte of the Tiethes; and that therunto the said Corbes and Herenaghs submitted themselves; but held their Herenachie free for ever, and could not be removed by any of the Temporal or Spiritual Lords, oy [or] other person whatsoever.” (*Appendix to Ulster Inquisitions. No. III.*)

The term *Corbe*, *Coarb*, *Comorban*, (Irish *Comhorba*,) seems to have puzzled Sir John Davies; he adopts in one of his works, a notion, put into his head by an Irish scholar, (whom he does not name,) that it was the title of an ecclesiastical dignity: and yet he finds it hard to explain how it was found constantly applied to persons who exercised no clerical functions whatever. Others have stumbled at the same difficulty. The matter, however, is extremely simple. Without meddling with Celtic etymologies, of which I know nothing, I find the word continually determined by its usage, to signify a *successor*. Certainly it is used most frequently, if not exclusively, in matters ecclesiastical; but mat-

ters ecclesiastical are of two kinds, temporal and spiritual. In spiritual matters, the *Corbe*, *Coarb*, or *Comorban*, is the person who succeeds to a spiritual rank, office, or jurisdiction; thus the Abbot of Iona, of Durrow, of Dunchrun, or of Derry Calgach, was the *Coarb* of Columb-kille:—the Abbot of Clonard was *Coarb* or successor of St. Finnian;—the Abbot of Clonmacnois *Coarb* or successor to St. Kieran, &c. Coarbs or Comorbans of this sort, are justly described as ecclesiastical dignitaries. But the occupants of the church-estates likewise claimed a right of succession in their properties: they held them by Tanistry from the founder of their sept, to whom they had originally been granted by the prior, abbot, bishop, &c., who had first put a Herenach on the lands. They were his successors,—that is Corbes. The difference between these two very different kind of *Corbes* is generally marked by the adjunct connected with the term. The *Coarb of a person* is his official representative, his spiritual successor; the *Corbe or Coarb of a place* is the occupant of the church-land there situated. Thus in the year 1146 it would appear that Erchelaid was *Coarb of Columb-kille*, that is Abbot of the monastery of Derry; while, at the same time, Maoliosa O'Branain was *Coarb of Derry*, that is, hereditary (or elective) occupant of the abbey-lands. All the Termon and Herenach lands in the Diocese of Derry, with the exception of those in Derry itself, are now annexed to the See, to be held in frankalmoign, (the Herenachs and Corbes having been adjudged to have no legal title in the same,) by patent granted in 1610, on the solicitation of George Montgomery, brother to the Lord Viscount Montgomery of the Ards, and first protestant Bishop of Derry, Raphoe, and Clogher.

These considerations are not out of place in the introduction to a document, in which the nature, sources, and management of the episcopal property in the Diocese of Derry are so frequently brought before us: some of them appear almost necessary to render it intelligible. I must add that the care which Archbishop Colton took to preserve to this See, property in which he had himself no permanent interest, far from casting any imputation upon his memory, seems to me to do him high honour.—So far as any judgment can be formed from this record, he seems to have been a truly well disposed and upright, as well as able man.

[The Sequel will appear in the next Number of the Journal.]